

UNIVERSITAS TERBUKA AND CLASS FORMATION IN INDONESIA

Atwi Suparman
Assistant Rector III
Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia

Abstract

Universitas Terbuka, as stated by Prof. Takahashi, is intended to undertake three missions. First, to increase access to higher education for high school graduates. Second, to provide further education for those who are already on the job. Third, to improve the quality of primary and secondary school teachers.

However, in 1992 the UT students' population (170.000) was dominated by primary and secondary school teachers (60 %). The others were non-working students fresh from senior high school (6 %) and working students (34 %). These figures show that the second and third missions are met satisfactorily but not the first one.

This paper examines the possible influence of UT on class formation in Indonesia, which has a plural society. Since UT is only eight years old and only released graduates in the last three years, it is too early to conduct a field study on the influence of UT on the class formation in Indonesia.

Therefore this paper discuss the UT study systems, people's attitudes toward higher education, and Indonesian plural society. The purposed hypotheses are :

1. The UT learning system is not conducive to the formation of an ethnic, descendant, family, and religious social stratification.
2. The UT learning system is more conducive to forming a job and economic social stratification.

I. Social Stratification

1. During the Dutch occupation, Dutch formed the highest stratum of society. Eurasian and Chinese were next and the lowest were the natives. Because of that social stratification, the Dutch managed to get all the best facilities: education, job and salary. Among the natives themselves, there was also a social stratification. The royal family and the Christians were considered higher. Ethnic groups, customs and traditions were also used to stratify. Therefore, a plural society was formed in Indonesia.
2. During the Japanese occupation (1942-1945), social stratification changed. The Japanese were the highest. However, natives got a wider chance to get a formal education from elementary to higher education. The Dutch language was not used any longer. Instead, Indonesian was used as a lingua franca. According to Soekanto (1984, p.55), this idea was to lower the social position of the Dutch and for the Japanese to gain popularity with the natives. The Japanese could thus get more support in order to further their expansion in Asia.
3. Since Independence, a transition of social stratification has taken place leading to the elimination of the influence of customs, descent, and family background. These efforts are continuing and have successfully met their aims. However from that time other factors emerged, such as education, job, and the acknowledgment of national heroes.
4. Nowadays since the economic sector of the development program is emphasised, material wealth has become important. The determinant factor has changed but Indonesia is still a plural society. Now the factors are ethnic groups, family background or descent, education, and job as well as material wealth (Soekanto, 1984, p.57). However, ethnicity, customs and traditions are getting less important.
5. The indications of social stratification currently found in higher education are:
 - a. the presence of ethnic group dormitories and organizations.
 - b. student recruitment influenced by family background or descent.
 - c. the tendency of parents to send their children to higher education without considering the children's talents and interests. This is to gain higher social status.
 - d. the opinion of students that government employees occupy the highest social strata.
 - e. the tendency of students to choose study programs that promise better prospects and a higher salary. This indication occurs because of the belief that material wealth is a symbol of a high social status.

II. Higher Education in Indonesia and UT:

1. Indonesia is an archipelago that consists of more than 13,000 islands. However, only 40 % of the islands are occupied: by more than 180 million people. In 1992 Indonesia had 49 state universities and 567 private universities.
2. The aim of Indonesian higher education as stated by Ranuwiharjo (1983) are:
 - a. To become a development center of science and technology and a center of research activity as stated in the national plan.
 - b. To educate students to master science and technology, to be loyal and responsible

to the future of the country.

c. To develop campus life as a scientific community with Pancasila moral standards and Indonesian identity.

3. People in Indonesia believe that a university degree can improve social status. Therefore, Susanto (1984), stated that regardless of the cost of study, 35% of parents tend to send their children to university, 15% to high school, and 31.8 % leave the decision to the children. Manual workers (25%), farmers (31%), merchant (35%), public servants and army (59%), tend to send their children to university. In another part of her book (p.240) she shows that 51.48 % of the respondents who come from different economic status feel dissatisfied with the formal education that they have already attained. The data tell us that although people are not satisfied with their formal education they still tend to send their children to university because they believe that a university degree can improve their social status. However, Iwanaga and Takahashi (1991, p.3) found that students' motives to enter Universitas Terbuka (UT) and the purpose of studying at UT are:

	Mean Standard,	Deviation
1. To deepen their knowledge in specific areas	3.92	0.37
2. To obtain necessary knowledge for their jobs	3.89	0.40
3. To obtain professional expertise	3.80	0.51
4. To do something for society	3.74	0.56
5. To be able to study at their own pace	3.73	0.54

The two groups of data shown by Susanto and Iwanaga and Takahashi are not contradictory, but complementary. The first data show parents' tendency to send their children to university, while the second data show the Students' motives in entering UT.

4. UT is the only state university which offers an opportunity to people to go to university without any entrance examinations. Therefore, at the beginning of its establishment, many people, regardless of their academic achievement, entered UT. There were 42,000 students registered at UT in the first year (1984) and the number increased to 70,000 in 1985. At that time UT did not have inservice training programs for primary school teachers. Therefore, the number was considered very high. Later, as many students found that they faced problems to complete their study individually they dropped out. In 1987 the total number of students was only 16,000. The dramatic decrease of students was due to the ineffectiveness of UT services. Iwanaga and Takasahshi (1991, p.3) pointed out specifically the importance of providing better printed materials and tutorials for UT students.
5. As stated by Iwanaga and Takahashi, Universitas Terbuka (UT) is intended to meet three purposes. First, to increase access to higher education for high school graduates. Second, to provide further education for those who are already on the job, and third, to improve the quality of primary and secondary school teachers. In fact, the 1992 UT student population (170,000) is dominated by primary and secondary school teachers (60%) who are taking higher degrees or diplomas. The rest consists of non-working students who are recent graduates from senior high school (6%) and working students (34%). This figure shows that the second and third purposes of UT are met satisfactorily but not the first one.

Here are just two reasons behind the figure :

The first reason is a significant increase in the number of primary and secondary school teachers who became UT students due to 1990 government policies. These policies were to improve the quality of primary school teachers who hold senior high school certificates by encouraging them to attain Diploma II (DII). The 1992 policies were to improve the quality of junior high school teachers who hold Diploma I (DI) by helping them to get D-III.

The second reason is the difficulty of students in completing their study at UT due to problems of learning independently or self-study among fresh high school graduates. They were accustomed to study under close supervision from teachers. This difficulty causes a higher drop-out rate among students, and a longer period of study compared to other state universities and private universities.

III. The Influence of UT on Class Formation in Indonesia

1. UT is a university that accepts students from wherever and from whatever ethnic groups they come. They register at the nearest Regional Office of which there are 32 all over Indonesia. They learn individually at home. Therefore, no dormitories are needed. Occasionally, some students learn in groups. They take examinations in the nearest center among 184 places in Indonesia. This learning system is not conducive to forming an ethnic social stratification.
2. The grouping system of student's names, examination records and UT alumni data is based on the regional offices where they are registered. This is meant to help them in getting any information that is needed. UT never lists and does not need to list students' names centrally according to families. This means that UT conditions are not conducive to forming a descendant social stratification system.
3. The UT student grouping system is also based on the study program. The University develops different services such as tutorials and registration for different study programs. For the following students, UT gives different services:
 - elementary teachers taking the Elementary Teacher Education program (80,000);
 - students from the National Family Planning Agency taking the Supervision Communication program (1,500); and
 - students from the Agriculture Department taking the Agriculture Supervision program (500).They are all treated differently from other UT students. This condition opens a possibility in forming a social stratification on a job basis.
4. UT has an Alumni Organization in each region. The purpose is to build a communication and a social relationship among the alumni. This condition can also create the possibility of developing a job stratification. This could come out as student's careers develop after they graduate from UT. Although it is perhaps too early to make the assumption, it is reasonable since UT degrees are accredited similarly to those of other state universities. This means that all students who are government employees, including elementary and junior high teachers, who graduate from UT will get promotion as long as the degree is

relevant to their job. If this assumption is correct, UT may also help create a job stratification in the society: especially a job stratification among government employees.

5. The course fee at UT is relatively low; only about 40 % of the other state universities' fees. Therefore, UT students come from all social and economic levels. Also, UT students can choose any programs they like. It means UT develops a democratic process in higher education in Indonesia. From this point of view, UT is less conducive to creating a social stratification based on material wealth. However, since UT graduates can expect better careers, it is possible that UT increases economic stratification among the middle class. Unfortunately, it is too early to conclude since UT is only 8 years old and has only produced *sarjana* graduates in the last three years.
6. Like other universities, UT offers Pancasila and Religion courses. The courses are designed to develop understanding among UT students regarding to the national philosophy or the five basic principles of the Republic of Indonesia. First, Belief in the One Supreme God; that is, to teach students to be sincere in their religion and have respect for other religions. This course is enhanced by a Religion course that has the same purpose. Second, Just and Civilized Humanity, that teaches students to have mutual respect for and cooperation with each other. Third, the Unity of Indonesia that teaches them to live in harmony without any racial, ethnic, religious and status conflicts. Fourth, Democracy, which is guided by inner wisdom in the unanimity arising out of Deliberation amongst Representatives. Fifth, Social Justice for the whole of the people of Indonesia that teaches wealth-creation in their respective jobs.

Pancasila and Religion courses are not only offered at higher education as at UT but also offered since elementary school. These continuous course programs are to develop one unity in order to eliminate, or at least to minimize, conflicts due to social stratification. By offering the two courses, hypothetically UT participates in preventing social stratification based on ethnic, family background and religion. UT is not a prosperous site for such social stratification.

IV. Concluding Remarks

1. Since the Dutch occupation, Indonesia has been a plural society. Horizontally, the society consists of varied ethnic groups, religions, customs and cultures. Vertically, it consists of different socio-economic levels. However, behind these differences, there is one common will within the nation and the country: one Indonesian Unity based on the Pancasila philosophy. The diversity does not create conflicts because of that common will. Therefore, the Indonesian motto is "Unity In Diversity".
2. Indonesians tend to believe that university degrees can increase social status. Therefore, even though course fees are high and parents' experience of formal education is not satisfying, they still send their children to higher education.
3. Universitas Terbuka is a state university open to any students from all over Indonesia who can learn at home without any requirements for a face-to-face meeting except for an occasional tutorial or examination. From this point of view, UT

does not change the structure of Indonesian society. However, UT offers learning services for groups of students who come from any departments or organizations. It means that UT creates a possibility to form social stratification based on job and education levels..

4. UT graduates have an opportunity of improving their economic level because their certificate and degree is approved equally to that of any other state university certificate and degree by the *government*. It shows up clearly in the salary system, either in the government or in the private sector. The system shows a high recognition level of individual education degrees. This situation can enhance the social formation of a middle class, based on material wealth.
5. UT offers Pancasila and Religion courses to students so that they can live in harmony and peace without conflicts due to ethnic groups, religions and family backgrounds. Also, UT prevents the possibility of forming a social stratification based on such criteria.

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BIOGRAPHY

Atwi Suparman was born in 1944 in Sumenep, Madura Island, East Java. He presently serves as Professor of Educational Technology and as Assistant Rector for System Operation at Universitas Terbuka. He received his Master's Degree in Educational Technology at Syracuse University, New York in 1978. Before completing his doctorate program in Education Technology at Jakarta Institute of Education Science in 1983, he taught at Stanford University from 1980-1981.